

A Cry of Helplessness

Turn to our Bibles to Psalm 69. Psalm 69. Psalm 69.

I'll be doing the entirety of the psalm. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God. Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck.

I sink in deep mire where there is no standing. I've come into deep waters where the floods overflow me. I am weary with crying.

My throat is dry. My eyes fail while I wait for my God. Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head.

They are mighty who would destroy me, being my enemies wrongfully. Though I have stolen nothing, I still must restore it. O God, you know my foolishness, and my sins are not hidden from you.

Let not those who wait for you, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed because of me. Let not those who seek you be confounded because of me, O God of Israel, because for your sake I have borne reproach. Shame has covered my face.

I have become a stranger to my brothers and an alien to my mother's children because zeal for your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me. When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, that became my reproach. I also made a sackcloth my garment.

I became a byword to them. Those who sit in the gate speak against me. I am the song of the drunkards.

But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord, in the acceptable time. O God, in the multitude of your mercy, hear me in the truth of your salvation. Deliver me out of the mire and let me not sink.

Let me be delivered from those who hate me and out of the deep waters. Let not the floodwater overflow me, nor let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut its mouth on me. Hear me, O Lord, for your lovingkindness is good.

Turn to me according to the multitude of your tender mercies, and do not hide your face from your servants, for I am in trouble. Hear me speedily, draw near to my soul, and redeem it. Deliver me because of my enemies.

You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor. My adversaries are all before you. Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness.

I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none. They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them, and their well-being a trap.

Let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see, and make their loins shake continually. Pour out your indignation upon them, and let your wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their dwelling place be desolate.

Let no one live in their tents, for they persecute the ones you have struck, and talk of the grief of those you have wounded. Add iniquity to their iniquity, and let them not come into your righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.

But I am poor and sorrowful. Let your salvation, O God, set me up on high. I will praise the name of God with a song.

I will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bull, which has horns and hooves. The humble shall see this and be glad.

And you who seek God, your hearts shall live. For the Lord hears the poor, and does not despise his prisoners. Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them.

For God will save Zion, and build the cities of Judah, that they may dwell there and possess it. Also the descendants of his servants shall inherit it, and those who love his name shall dwell in it. Let us pray.

With these words, Lord, of grief and sorrow that eventually turn into a song of joy and praise, may this also be our life, God. For we will certainly, or even now, have struggles and hardships within, without, at the same time even. And so, like the psalmist here, we cry out to be saved and delivered from our hardship, that we sink in a deep mire of tears, our own tears.

Yet, Lord, we know you are with us. And if we have not, we've forgotten that fact. May this sermon remind us again, that along with heaven and earth, we will praise you all the days of our life.

Amen. This earnest and fervent psalm is an intense cry of helplessness, at least it begins that way. It begins with striking language that many of us, I believe, can relate to, but also includes lines of strong condemnation against those who have unjustly hated David, bringing suffering and hardship upon him.

Yet in the midst of his bemoaning of his lot and crying for justice, stands our Savior, the one who suffered for us even as he fulfilled righteousness for our salvation. This is one of the more quoted psalms in the New Testament, as we shall see. Even so, we shall see also how both in our sanctification we struggle with hardships and must cry for mercy and even justice, as the psalmist himself does, while also looking to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who went before us, walking the path of persecution and disdain for our justification and our perseverance in grace, because a number of these references are to our Lord and Savior.

A Cry of Helplessness

The first point of verses 1 through 12, a cry of helplessness. I suppose I could say also hopelessness, but not quite, because he has hope. He is indeed crying out to God, Save me, O God! Once you do that, that is a sign of some hope in your life.

If you had no hope, you would simply give up and not cry to God at all. And he describes here these waters, as we know, waters of tribulation, of hardship, of bemoaning his hardship, of the consequences of the difficulties of his life. The waters have come up to my neck.

I sink in deep mire where there is no standing. We've all been there. We've had a lost loved one, perhaps, a series of terrible happenings in our life, feeling like the world is exploding or imploding around us and beneath us, that the ground is shaken and the earth will swallow us up.

It feels just like the psalmist here, a flood of pain, of worry, of sadness, that there is no easy way out and no conclusion. And so we cry, as the psalmist does, to the Lord God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. And he is weary of this crying.

I am weary, verse 3, my throat is so dry my eyes fail while I wait for my God. He's cried a river around him. And he kept crying until he could cry no more.

We too, I believe, at times have done this in our lives. And it feels like we have drained ourselves emotionally, physically, spiritually, and at times the tears may eventually stop altogether, although initially it feels like it never ends. The psalmist, David, the king of Israel, the one who killed Goliath as a teenager, can you imagine that? Maybe 16, 18, we don't quite know.

Remember how he killed him? You're like, well, the stone pastor. He went up to him and took off his head, too, made sure he was really dead. This hardened soldier, we cry like the rest of us.

The Lord gave him this and other psalms, of course, that we can relate to, we can meditate upon, and sing. As you know, I'm going through church history, and as I've done this a couple of times, I go in cycles with some of the topics because they're good to go over as a church, I put in more information into it. And I'm reading some of the early church descriptions of what they did during their time of praise and prayer.

They would have, in the monasteries, especially in the 300s, their evening time and their morning time, the offices, I think, the column of prayer and praise and singing of the psalms and reciting of the psalms. Things like this to reflect their lives. And these psalms remind us that the Lord indeed listens to us just as he listened to David, the very same David who sinned, who brought a man to death in wartime because of the mercies of our Lord and Savior.

But what drove David to such a sad and nigh desperate state we read in the opening verses here? Well, he explains here, in verses 4 and following, there are those who hate me without a cause. They despise me. They want nothing to do with me.

It's quite the opposite. They don't just want nothing to do with me. They want to get rid of me.

In fact, we read, there are more than the numbers of my hairs on my head. They are mighty who would destroy me. They want him wiped out.

He describes it as hate. He means that, I think, at the very least, objectively, I've mentioned this before a few times, as I recall, that regardless of their flattering lips and what they may say and smile at him, their actions and stated goals are clearly the opposite. And not just the opposite, but full of hate and venom of some sort that they wish to destroy him.

Those are his words here. And could be various and sundry things in his life. You can think of multiple things that happened that he struggled with.

The same happens today, unfortunately. Men who hate the church and hate Christians without a cause, there's no good reason for them to have such anger towards us, to have such disdain towards David and ourselves. Hating us without a cause.

He means, of course, without a just cause. People come up with causes and excuses all the time. They will say it.

They must say it. It's the human condition. You have to give a reason for why you do something.

Whether it's right or wrong or confused, it doesn't matter. That's how we are constituted. And so they make these excuses and they do things like invade churches in Minnesota out of hate.

They're willing to trample things down because of such hatred. Jesus was hated without a cause. John 15:25, this classic passage, they hated me without a cause and they are more than the hairs of my head.

I'm outnumbered. I'm outgunned. I'm outsurrounded.

They're everywhere. Jesus, but this happened that the word might be fulfilled which was written in their law. They hated me without a cause, he speaks to the Jews, planning to kill him.

His own brothers, his own kinsmen. And so this psalm we see already in the opening verses reflects the life of Jesus and its fulfillment. And so far as David is a type of Christ and we know he was as a king, and so we see in this psalm, and we're going to find more verses tying to the life of Christ, that he is the one who fills this up to the brim.

And what it points to is still relevant for all Christians even so. Relevant objectively as so far as 2,000 years ago, Christ was surrounded. People hated him for without a cause.

He was truly innocent in a way David could never comprehend because he too was a sinner. He acknowledges this of course in verse 5. But he has no sin with respect to them. He didn't do anything wrong against them and neither did Christ.

It shows that Christ is the suffering servant for us. We all suffer to some degree of course in following our Lord God and we talked about this this morning providentially there a number of times. He uses that word endure or suffer there in 2nd Timothy.

And Christ did this of course in his suffering and his enduring in a unique way that we can never follow. He suffered and he was humiliated for us and died for us as the second Adam. He knew this was going to happen and yet he took upon him a body of a man anyways.

It went through the misery and the pain as a man so that we would be here this evening praising his name. And it continues on here to describe this that they are mighty who would destroy me being my enemies wrongfully. So he repeats himself again.

Though I have stolen nothing I still must restore it. So it's adding insult to injury we like to say. You hate me for without a reason.

There's no good reason why you disdain for me. You don't want to be around me. In fact you want to destroy me.

You make it worse and you force me to return that which I never did steal. I have to restore when I did nothing wrong. I have to make some kind of restitution.

The particulars of course are unknown here in the psalm as it is and many of the psalms and thus there's enough tantalizing details you're like okay what exactly is okay maybe this fits my situation. But not so much detail you're like oh that's just purely David and nothing to do with me. And that of course is by the guiding hand of the Spirit.

But of course it's not that case with respect to Christ. He restored what he did not steal. He gave restitution for the law when he did not break the law.

He was truly innocent yet took the guilt of our sin and went beyond that and fulfilled it in our stead and restored what we lost by our transgression and that is righteousness and the honor and the glory of God Almighty. That's what we are reading here. At the same time he cries out with his own particular situation hardship it is echoing the hardship of Christ in the future.

A foreshadowing. Even the midst of deep waters overflowing us with grief there is still good news that Jesus Christ has covered our sin and taken what we deserve. He stole nothing and he restored it all for us.

And he gives a confession here David does in verse 5 and following. Oh God you know my foolishness and my sin are not hidden from you. So he does confess that although with respect to his enemies it gives him no cause.

He's innocent. He's just fine. He did nothing wrong but he knows he has his own sins otherwise.

In other situations privately and the like. And my sins are not hidden from you. He acknowledges us as we know often in the Psalms.

God you see my heart. You see beyond the externalities. And so it's a confession.

Yes. A reminder in his conscience that yes before them I'm not a sinner but I'm not going to become arrogant about it. I still sin God.

You know I have sins. And so the sensitive conscience of the Christian is often quick to say yes I'm innocent here but you know I still feel like a sinner because I am sinning elsewhere in life somewhere at some time some way. Because of this David asked our Lord God above that others will not stumble because of these sins.

Let not those who wait for you, verse 6, O Lord God of hosts be ashamed because of me. Because of the sins that I do have. Not the sins that are made up by these enemies who hate you and hate me and hate the church.

But the real sins that are there. People see it. I'm a weak and frail man and king in this regard.

So it's a it's a good prayer. It's a good request and something perhaps we can incorporate in our prayer at times as well Lord. Lord God we pray to him perhaps and say we don't want others stumbling because of our weaknesses.

Because of our frailties. Because we have stumbled here and there O God. Let not those who seek you be confounded because of me O God of Israel.

I don't want to be a stumbling stone. It's gonna be there Lord. You know my foolishness.

I have sinned. But may the effects be watered down as only you can. In your prayer he bears the reproach for God's sake.

Verses 7 through 12. Because for your sake I have borne reproach. Shame has covered my face and I have become a stranger my brothers and an alien to my mother's children.

So he bears the reproach and the shame for God Almighty. And it's of course not just David's calling. All of us must do so whenever we are called by public profession of faith.

We stand firm with our Lord and Savior by doing our duty when mocked or ridiculed. Again I talked about this a little bit this morning. That's part of the shame and enduring is to do it for Christ's sake.

You're making a stand for him. And it may happen to us. We don't look for trouble.

And yet if it comes to us we should never deny our Lord and Savior. But ever stand firm and say this this is what I'm called to do. Is to say yes I'm a believer and you may lose your job someday.

We already know this has happened. I don't think I would have saw this when I was younger in my 2000s here at church. I didn't think it would get that bad in America.

Although I was a dispensationalist I thought we all had the guillotine by 2021. So who knows. But it's still unsettling at times to remind ourselves people have taken a stand in America and lost their jobs.

And the consequences thereof are say I've become a stranger my brothers and an alien to my mother's children because zeal for your house has eaten me up. I have become a stranger to those near to me. You can imagine how much this hits the core of who we are.

Not just co-workers although that's uncomfortable. You've got to work with them all day and there they are walking away from you looking down at you talking behind your back perhaps or maybe just ignoring you I don't know. Neighbors you could bear that but your own brothers and sisters your family members saying I want nothing to do with you for you follow Christ.

Turning away from you. Jesus too was rejected by his family. John 7 5 we read for even his brothers did not believe him.

He was out all alone standing for his father his heavenly father. What he said and did was more than they could handle. They were embarrassed.

They didn't want to be around him. So the reasons of course vary for us. We're not Christ in that sense but we still share in that kind of suffering at times.

The reasons here is more specific. He says because zeal for your house has eaten me up and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me. Zeal.

David wanted to build a temple as you recall and God told him no you have a bloody heritage and I don't want that being associated with the temple but you will have the son of peace Solomon to build it for you and so he did. Christ in John 2 17 when he had made a whip of cords he drove them out of the temple and with the sheep and the oxen and poured out the changers money and overturned the tables. I would call that pretty zealous.

Zeal. And he said to those who sold the doves take these things away do not make my father's house a house of merchandise. Many disciples remembered what was written.

Zeal for your house has eaten me up. Again Psalm 69 in the New Testament that Jesus fulfilled it. He is the one who is zealous for the house of God and the most purest sense that David ever could have been because he is the son in the house.

And we should imitate Christ and David's zeal as well. Not with sword or whip of course where we are today but with the power bestowed upon us as we are able to protect the church and God and our families and his honor in the name of our Lord and Savior. Zeal.

Sometimes we have to stir ourselves up and that's why God gave us the singing of his praise and his honor and his word. The unfair reproach verses 9 through 12. Because of the zeal, the blame and censure, that's the idea of reproach that's undeserved, has fallen upon him because he identifies with the God of the covenant.

When I wept and wept and chastened my soul with fasting that became my reproach as well. They looked down upon him. The grieving and the censure to the point of sackcloth and ashes is what he finds himself here.

That's how bad his crying was, his tears and difficulties. And it continues on here. When I was chastened my soul with fasting that became a reproach.

I also made sackcloth my garment. That's the way they show public mourning. I became a byword to them.

Those who sit in the gate speak against me and I am the song of the drunkards. Who sits in the gates? I think we all know that by now. The leadership, the elders, the judges.

Those who sit in the gates speak against me. He doesn't have anybody on his side. It's like going to the courts and you find out every court, every appellate court, every appellate appellate court, federal court, up to the Supreme Court, they're all saying we don't want anything to do with you.

We're against you. And the whole world is mocking him. In fact, his name is a song among the drunkards and I don't think that's a compliment.

It's not a compliment. And it's a bad thing as he reproached. He's been blamed and censured and looked down upon.

Romans 15 3, for even Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, the reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me. Again, Jesus Christ fulfilling Psalm 69 in this verse. And so we see our Lord and Savior fulfilling this psalm insofar as there is misery in this life.

Jesus suffered it for our sake. The disdain of David becomes the disdain of Jesus. What happened to David was but a precursor of the great self-effect and redemptive suffering of our dear Savior.

A Prayer of Hopefulness

Verses 13 to 22. A prayer of hopefulness. There he's helpless as you can imagine up to this point.

Everything stacked against him. Personally, he's struggling. Even the leadership in the high places and the low places of the drunkards look down upon him.

It's publicly ridiculed. But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord, in the acceptable time. O God, in the multitude of your mercies, hear me in the truth of your salvation.

And he ties it fully back to verse 1 and 2. Deliver me out of the mire, the very mire he spoke of earlier when he's crying so much he has no ground to stand upon. He sinks into that deep mire of miserableness and difficulty. This prayer to the Lord God in verses 13 through 18.

The acceptable time, of course, which is God's time that he hears him. But anytime we call upon our Lord and Savior, because every time and anytime is an acceptable time for us, for our Father wishes to hear from us. He will listen because of the multitude of his mercies.

They are without limits. So therefore never stop petitioning God Almighty for help. Help, help, and more help until there is no more breath in you.

Cry for prevention. Verses 14 to 15. Deliver me out of the mire.

Let me not sink in. Let me be delivered from those who hate me. We're tying it again to the prior point that there are more than the numbers on my head.

These people who hate me wish to destroy me. Out of the deep waters, let not the floodwaters overflow me, nor let the deep swallow me up. He already talked about his suffering, the mire and the flood.

So he repeats the idea again, which is okay when you pray at times to repeat. It's even normal. But here he, writing these things, becomes a prayer, although it is a psalm.

It's both. And he prays for speedy deliverance. Verse 16 to 18.

Hear me, O Lord, for your loving-kindness is good, is covenantal faithfulness. Turn to me according to the multitude of your tender mercies, and do not hide your face from your servant. I am trouble.

Hear me speedily. Verse 17. It's okay to ask for a quick response from God Almighty.

You're not somehow a sinner because you want it. Lord, I want it now. We kind of make that joke about God giving me patience and give it to me now.

There's some truth to that, to be sure. Depends upon your heart at the end of the day. But his is genuine.

His is sincere. God, give it to me now. I need it speedily.

I need deliverance here and now. Of course, with the caveat implied in here and expressed elsewhere in the Psalms. In your time, in the acceptable time, as you deem fit.

But if you're gonna have a request, this is my request, God. Please give it to me. You too should do the same and have the same heart and cry out for him.

But if we have to wait, we must wait. Reproach and isolation. Verses 19 to 22.

You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor. My adversaries are all before you. Reproach has broken my heart and I am full of heaviness.

I look for someone to take pity, but there was none. For comforters, but I found none. Repeating a similar theme before, right? He mentions those who hate me, Lord, deliver me from them.

It's more negative in that sense. He doesn't say exactly how to deliver him. Our God, I'm crying so much.

I'm sinking in the mire. Please get me out of the mire. And here he says, I have no one to turn to.

We read that in the prior section, right? My own brothers turn against me. They want nothing to do with me. Those who are my kinsfolk want nothing to do with me.

I have nowhere to go. I am alone. I am isolated.

David has been there. It's a further description of his pain in his life from his enemies. They blame and censure him for things he did not do and he cannot find a shoulder to cry on.

I look for someone to take pity, but there was none. Worse, those who could have relieved David his troubles gave him gall for food and vinegar for drink, which as you can imagine is not a good thing to have in your misery, but rather makes your misery even worse. Verse 21, they also gave me gall for food and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

This befell David in figure, but in Christ to the letter. One commentator puts it, Matthew 27 34. I think we all know this one.

They gave him sour wine mingled with gall to drink, but when he had tasted it he would not drink. Christ the suffering servant is what we are seeing described here in the life of David. Often we think of Isaiah 53, right, for the suffering servant's song and praise of our Lord and prophecy there and the great prophecy of Isaiah 53.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities.

The chastisement of our peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed. Yes, the psalm paints, it seems to me, yet the psalm paints a more vivid picture of Christ's suffering for us. In particulars and details we see fulfilled in his life, showing the personal pain that he experienced for our public good.

Of course the two go together, there's not a contradiction there, but I want to show us here that that's the suffering servant prophecy of Isaiah 53, but here's the suffering psalm, the same Christ for us. If he had never suffered for our sins we could never be saved. Thus the psalm in 53 should be precious to us.

A Hope for Justice

But it was still written by David for his immediate concerns and one of his immediate concerns was justice, verses 22 to 29. Let their table be a trap, let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see, and make their loins shake continually. Pour out indignation upon them and let your wrathful anger take hold of them.

Continues on to verse 28. This is the imprecation part, right? The imprecatory psalm. This is an imprecatory psalm that is to pray curses and judgment upon one's enemies.

And I went over this in prior psalms and summarized these things and explained some understandings of how to approach such psalms. And I want to remind us again here, many of these psalms are not explicit. In fact, none of them are explicit with respect to names.

He's not, he doesn't name names. It's quite interesting. And nor are the curses always as detailed as this.

They are about justice and vindication. It's not a personal petty vendetta. It shouldn't be.

Because in the context of the public position of David as king and as leader of his people. In other words, the enemies are public, not private, not your neighbor coming after you. And of course, David is a type of Christ.

All these particulars show us the use of and the limits of our use today of the imprecations. We can and should cry out for justice, that justice would be done. I pray, and I've mentioned it on social media, I've mentioned during my summary of what I do, I tie current events in with biblical things to show people that I don't pretend to have an answer on all things, to be sure.

I go a different direction. And here, the direction with the Minnesota invasion of that church and scaring little kids, is that the book, the law would be thrown at them to bring such fear of God upon them that they would repent. Isn't that a good prayer? You can call that imprecation.

I'm asking God to bring judgment upon them, but judgment to what end? That they would repent. That's why God gave us the law. So we can see our sin and they need to see their sins.

He's poor and sorrowful and innocent. That's the whole context. That's the framing of the whole psalm, right? David is innocent.

He's done nothing wrong. And they have hate, kind of hate, that wishes to annihilate or destroy him, as verse 4 says. So it's not just, again, a small thing, you know, you just really annoy me, I don't like you kind of a thing.

Those who hate me without cause. And they want to wipe him out. So he has a cry of proper justice, a fair justice.

And thus he has this prayer of punishment, verses 23 to 28. That they would be brought to fear that their loins would shake continually. That their homes and where they live would be destroyed.

Acts 120 we read, in fact, here. We read, let their eyes be darkened and they may not see. Let their loins be shake continually.

They're always in fear. Pour out your indignation, verse 24. Let your wrathful anger take them.

Verse 25, let their dwelling place be desolate and let no one live in their tents. That, brothers and sisters, is quoted in Acts 120 for Judas. For it is written in the book of Psalms, let his dwelling place be desolate and let no one live in it.

So not only, it's quite interesting, not only is this Psalm about Jesus, it's about things around Jesus. Judas, you're not a Savior. How did he get into prophecy here? I think they're applying the imprecatory Psalm here upon those who are wicked.

And they're showing that there's an ultimate fruit, even in this life, that they don't repent. This is what's going to happen to them. These kind of things.

So I don't think it's a prophecy of him per se, but more of an application like we have in a sermon. But I could be wrong. But it is applied to him in Acts 120.

Lastly, let them be blotted out in the book of the living, we read, and not be written with the righteous, verse 28. If we note verse 26, it says the wicked go after the wounded. For they persecute the ones you have struck, and talk of the grief of those you have wounded.

God has wounded them. God has struck David, that is, with hardships and providence. And that happens to us.

And God can do that. He has the prerogative. But they, like jackals or wolves, go after and pounce people who are wounded already.

That's the picture there. They have no remorse and no pity. What's interesting here is it's applied to the Jews of Jesus' day.

Not just Judas. In Romans 11, right, Romans 9, 10, 11, as you recall, that great discourse where Paul's explaining, I love my kinsmen, I want them to be saved, but not all Israel is Israel. And we have evidence of that because right back at the beginning with Abraham and his sons, one son was elect and the other son was not.

Right, he unpacks this theme through these chapters. We read in the middle of that discourse in verse 9 and 10 of chapter 11 in Romans, let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block, and he continues, let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see. Quoting this psalm.

The psalm paints a picture of our suffering Savior and also paints a picture of the enemies of the church. Isn't that something? Paul does not stop there, but he continues, but I am poor and sorrowful. Let your salvation, O God, set me up on high.

A Praise of Thanksgiving

I will praise the name of God with a song. I will magnify him with thanksgiving. The praise of thanksgiving, verses 30 to 36 in particular.

Thanksgiving, of course, a praise and a song before him, a time of praise to the Lord for anticipated deliverance or actual deliverance. It's not clear in the time frame here that it happened by the time he finished writing the psalm. Is he anticipating in the future that happens sometimes in the psalm? He's excited now about what will happen in his deliverance.

It doesn't matter. Either way, his helplessness and what feels like hopelessness has now blossomed into praise and honor of God, of hope and a shiny future. And this praise before God, let your salvation, O God, set me on high.

I will praise the name of God. I will magnify him. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or a bull.

Right? The praise of God, the thanksgiving to him, a show of gratefulness with his lips is better than sacrifices. We have yet another idea here showing us in the psalms that they were not bowed down and bowed under the false understanding that's sometimes taught today, especially in dispensationalism, that it was all about the physical activity of the sacrifice itself and these animals and things like that in the temple. Those were never there.

They were just to assist in teaching and instructing them. David recognized this. God never cared for the altars and the sacrifices of an ox, but used them to teach the Jews multiple lessons, the greatest of which, of course, is Jesus is the great lamb.

He's the one that's been slain on the altar in your stead. And thus, all the sacrifices, all the activities in the temple, either from the offerer who brings the offering or the priests themselves, who are also but mere men, should have been enacted by faith, trusting that God is using these things to help them grow as believers. And therefore, they should have one, godly sorrow, or two, godly praise, depending on the situation at hand.

Humble seekers, verses 32 to 33, the humble shall see this and be glad. They're going to see the deliverance of God, delivering David, perhaps in particular, publicly delivering him. And

you who seek God, your hearts shall live, for the Lord hears the poor and does not despise his prisoners.

Those humble to him will rejoice in David's deliverance and God's deliverance and the people's deliverance, wherever that may be in history. The Lord hears the poor in spirit. Here, and many other places in the Old Testament, hearing the poor is the poor in spirit.

The word spirit isn't here, it's just the Lord hears the poor and it does not despise his prisoners. But we know here, clearly in the context, it's the humble that are poor in spirit. Verse 32, these are the ones that God hears.

It's not as though God cares about whether you're rich or poor. To have that interpretation in this particular text and elsewhere, which the liberals did, and probably still do today, I've been paying attention to them for a while, obviously, they would say, well look, God cares for the poor. But verse 29, I am poor and I am sorrowful.

Let your salvation, O God, set me on high. David was not poor as a king, but he's poor in spirit. That's what God looks to.

The heart, not your material or lack of material gain. I got the whole thing wrong, even today in these confused circles, unfortunately. And thus, from that understanding, when he talks about prisoner, he means those trapped by evildoers as David himself.

He's trapped. I've got nowhere to go to. I'm isolated.

Where can I go? I'm outnumbered. We would say today he's a prisoner of his circumstances, perhaps. And there's some truth to that, if it's true, depending on a person's life.

And all should praise him. He ends here with a happy heart. The heaven and earth praise him.

The sea and everything that moves in them. For God will save Zion and build the cities of Judah, that they may dwell there and possess it. Also the descendants of his servants shall inherit it.

And those who love his name shall dwell in it. David turns to the world with the promise of God's salvation. He's done this already in a number of Psalms, as you recall.

I haven't counted them all up. Just tells the world, come to him, come to God, come to Zion and worship this, the only true God. For God will save Zion and build the cities of Judah, which is a picture of the Lord settling us in his kingdom, salvation, and ultimately heaven.

It's not a physical picture any more than being poor. It was a picture of physical poverty, but of the heart. And this is a picture of the invisible church.

Revelation 21, now I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth have passed away. Also there was no more sea.

Then I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. This is pointing to the future, that God will build up the cities. He will save Zion, the city of our God, Jerusalem.

He means, of course, the spiritual Jerusalem, the church, all of us in heaven in this beautiful picture of Revelation 21. And the descendants of those in the church and the servants shall inherit it. Those who love his name shall dwell in it, not those who obey enough to save themselves to get to heaven.

But it begins with faith, working through love, ultimately in our sanctification. And so the saints knew of love and the importance of love before God. No matter how hopeless it seems, brothers and sisters, nor how helpless you feel, always bring your troubles to the Lord, for his mercies are multitude.

Meditate upon this psalm as a picture, of course, of Christ suffering for us, dying in our stead, and covering our sin, and preserving us to heaven, that we may rejoice and love his name forever and ever. Amen. Let us pray.

Indeed, Father God above, preserve us and sustain us, encourage us as needed in this psalm, I pray, Lord, each of us in our own particular way, that we would not lose sight of who Jesus has done for us, and he indeed suffered, and we will suffer with him as well, but not to the extent that he did, God. And that we can always cry, should always cry out to you, knowing that you will hear us, because you love us with an everlasting love. Amen.